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15 November 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: NIE 24-54: "Probable Developments in Italy"

BACKGROUND

1. This estimate is the third in the series of NIE's on Italy, NIE-71, "Probable Developments in Italy," having been published on 31 March 1953, and SE-24, "The Political Outlook in Italy," on 30 December 1953. The present estimate was scheduled by the IAC as a regular part of the NIE program for 1954 (IAC-D-1/6). First scheduled for second quarter publication, it was postponed by IAC action in April to the third quarter (IAC-D-1/7) and finally by IAC action in July to the fourth quarter (IAC-D-1/8). All departmental contributions were received by 23 September, and a draft was forwarded to the IAC representatives on 21 October.

DISCUSSION

2. The principal conclusions of the earlier estimates remain generally valid, and they are therefore repeated in substance in the present estimate. The progress of this estimate through the coordination machinery was reasonably smooth, although it was slowed by protracted discussion of a few questions. The discussions centered mainly upon the incumbent government's capabilities and intentions with regard to undermining the political power and prestige of the Communist Bloc, and upon the outlook for Communist Bloc gains in the next Italian general elections. There was also considerable discussion of the orientation of the government which the Italian anti-Communist parties would organize, in the event that the Left Bloc improved its electoral position in the next elections. However, agreement among the IAC representatives was reached on all major points, and it is unlikely that any significant changes will be suggested at the IAC meeting.

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3. It is probable, however, that the Air Force member of the IAC will recommend additions or, alternatively, will take footnotes to paragraph 40, which deals with the numbers of "Communists and Communist sympathizers" in the military establishment. First, he will probably want to quantify the numbers in the Italian officer corps as 2-3% and in the ranks as 11-13%. Second, he will probably want to add a sentence to the effect that the proportion of "Communists and Communist sympathizers" among civilian employees of the military establishment is even greater--25-35%. We believe that these Air Force suggestions should be opposed on grounds that the reliability of any such percentage figures is dubious, especially since they attempt to lump Communist sympathizers together with Communists.

SHERMAN KENT
Assistant Director
National Estimates

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